



YOUR DIET & DIABETES

Diabetes is a serious disease that happens when your body has trouble managing and using blood glucose, a sugar that your body uses as fuel.

With close to 29 million U.S. adults living with type 2 diabetes and a staggering 86 million in danger of being diagnosed, the need to start making healthy choices is more critical than ever. To be sure, our everyday behaviors can determine if we develop this serious condition or not. Data from the Nurses' Health Study suggests that 90 percent of type 2 diabetes can be attributed to lifestyle choices including excess weight, lack of exercise, a less-than-healthy diet and smoking. And a more recent study published in *PLoS Medicine* indicates that diet, in particular, may play a key role in diabetes prevention. The study followed more than 200,000 people over a 20-year period and found that:

- » People who chose diets that were predominately of plant-based foods developed type 2 diabetes 20% less often than the rest of the study subjects.
- » For those with the very healthiest plant-based diets (including fruits, vegetables, nuts, beans, and whole

grains), the reduction in type 2 diabetes was 34%.

- » Those who made less healthy choices (such as sugar-sweetened beverages and refined grains) developed type 2 diabetes 16% more often than the rest.

It's important to note that you can follow a healthy diet all your life and still develop diabetes. And not everyone who chooses an animal-based diet that is high in refined sugars will develop diabetes. However, the data does show that healthy dietary choices play a strong role in diabetes prevention.

WHAT YOU CAN START DOING TODAY

You can start making healthier diet choices this very minute and it's not as hard as you may think! Try by incorporating as many of these strategies as you can:

- » **Include at least one fruit or veggie at every meal.** Even better, try to fill up half your plate with produce. Fruits and vegetables are rich in dietary fiber, antioxidants and vitamins and minerals, and can offer protection against developing type 2 diabetes.

- » **Swap refined carbs for whole grains.** There is convincing evidence that diets rich in whole grains protect against diabetes, whereas diets rich in refined carbohydrates (white bread, crackers, chips, etc.) lead to increased risk. Brown rice, quinoa, oats and bulgur are all excellent sources of whole grains.
- » **Reduce your intake of saturated fat, sodium and added sugar.** This could mean having lean turkey instead of a ribeye steak. And reducing your consumption of processed foods is a key way to reduce the amount of added sugars and sodium you eat. Read nutrition labels so you know what you're eating.

TYPES OF DIABETES

How people with diabetes manage their blood glucose levels depends, in part, on the type of diabetes they have. The most common are type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes.

With type 1 diabetes, your body doesn't make enough of a hormone called insulin. Insulin signals the body's

cells to let glucose inside. The body can't produce enough insulin because the immune system, your body's defense against germs and foreign substances, mistakenly attacks and destroys the cells in your pancreas that make insulin.

Type 2 diabetes is the most common. It occurs when either your body's cells have trouble using insulin or your body doesn't produce enough insulin to handle the glucose in your blood.

Both types can develop at any age. Type 1 is most often diagnosed in children and young adults, while type 2 shows up most in middle-age and older people. Gestational diabetes occurs only during pregnancy, but increases your chances of developing type 2 later in life.

Diabetes symptoms can vary by type. Some shared symptoms include increased thirst, hunger, and urination. Symptoms of type 1 can start quickly, over a few weeks. Type 2 symptoms tend to develop slowly over years, making them less noticeable.

Source: <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2017/12/managing-diabetes>

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

- » What type of diabetes do I have?
- » How do I best manage my type of diabetes?
- » How and when do I test my blood sugar?
- » What are the benefits and risks of any medications or treatments?
- » Can you suggest a healthy meal plan and safe ways to be more active?
- » How often should I schedule checkups?
- » Are there new technologies that can help me manage my type of diabetes?